The Inquirer

THE UNITARIAN AND FREE CHRISTIAN WEEKLY • Founded 1842

REGISTERED AS A NEWSPAPER | No. 6165 | Saturday, September 3rd 1960 | Price 4d.

THE WAY WE HAVE COME

AN INQUIRY

by Wallace Tavener

LET us first put down in prosaic form some of the main characteristic positions that have been held by practically all Unitarians in modern times.

(1) The second person in the Trinity is not God but man.
(2) The incarnation is to be thought of universally as a latency in all humanity.
(3) The Church is a historical and not a supernatural production.
(4) The Word of God is in all the forms of inspiration experienced by mankind.
(5) Holy Writ is a non-final expression of human genius.
(6) Reason and conscience are the authority to which the claims of revelation must submit.
(7) The Lord's Supper is commemorative of all saintly heroism.
(8) The "problem of evil" at its theological level presents an inscrutable enigma, but at the level of human action the obligation is laid on us all to oppose evil and promote the good as we can by practical effort.

A favourite way of encouraging prejudice is to represent such propositions as negations. But they would never have come on to the scene unless they had something to assert. If it comes to that all assertions imply some sort of negation, especially assertions accompanying a revolutionary movement of thought. The question is, of course, whether what is asserted is more considerable than what is denied.

More Not Less

Now it will be seen that all these Unitarian discernments have a common element, all springing from the same temper. If they are considered carefully, separately and together, they are seen to express a definite shift of emphasis in religious understanding. And the new emphasis is obviously a humanist one. It is the humanist element in the context of our religion which gives the—THE—stamp to Unitarianism.

With contemporary forms of humanism in mind we ask at once whether the humanist emphasis indicated a movement away from theism. We can be sure that the Unitarians who expended a great deal of energy in establishing these principles would have been very startled to be told that they were sponsoring an inevitable atheism or agnosticism. What they certainly conceived themselves to be engaged upon was the expansion of the sense of God so that it might touch more inclusive ranges of experience than those allowed by orthodox dogma. "Narrow" is the word constantly being applied to orthodox ideas. It was the unbeliefs of orthodoxy that repelled Unitarians. They wanted more, not less.

The critical reply that the paternalistic theism of Unitarians became a boundless, shapeless sentimentalism disconnected with reality had some substance in it. Indeed it has something to do with our story here, but it is not a theme that we have space to more than mention here.

The First Principles

So then we find the Unitarian movement, when it was a movement, employing humanist reassessments for the sake of a broadening piety. This is where both the Unitarian movement and the understanding of it fail. It had given itself the unique task of producing nothing less than a humanist theology. But it quailed before the task, abandoned it as too troublesome, and has had to endure increasing insignificance ever since. Having pushed forward to these primary revolutionary positions we seem to have repented our boldness. Often a fair degree of courage takes us only to the point of discovery that more courage is demanded than we first saw. That moment for us seems to have passed unobserved.

There is no doubt that Unitarians had put themselves in a bold and unique position from which to mediate the inherited religious ideas to the modern intelligence. But somehow nothing came of it. We did not realise that our position had to be tenaciously thought out, consolidated and firmly developed, or abandoned. Having neglected them we did not know what to do with our first principles except to go on repeating them like a child who keeps on mumbling the alphabet with which it cannot spell.

It is this failure of Unitarians to realise their own strength which was detected from outside by those who

initiated what we called the Barthian movement. It was observed that we had not the courage of our own humanism, and that a few hefty blows of blank contradiction and a little scornful huffing and puffing and the Unitarian case would quit without a squeak.

Rediscovering Ourselves

And now that the Barthian movement has spent its force, and has collapsed of its own inherent unreason, we might think it is time to rediscover ourselves. But this will need heroism. To say that our position has not improved is to put it kindly. Also our sense of mission has gone and we have elevated the single principle of freedom in terms of our own disagreement on everything to the point that our precious non-subscription is threatening us with nonentity.

We who had been on the threshold of a distinctive humanist theology now find ourselves frightened of humanism and without a theology. And this in a world where there is a great deal of sympathy for humanism and much tolerance, if not active interest in, theological discussion. We are anti-humanist through genteel prejudice, and without a theology through amiable negligence. Some seem to think that an ideological struggle lies ahead for us in British Unitarianism. But the moment for that has passed a very long time ago. If we could not discover our vital centre before why should we be able to do so in the future? At present there does not seem to be enough steam in the denomination to produce the high argumentative force either to smash or to save the movement.

Yet who knows anything at all about the future?

Not so Small

Here for instance is a small thing I didn't foresee, and I am not sure that it is small. An Annual Meeting at our church raised a point, and this was taken up by Committee meetings, and I found it was not going to be lost sight of. And what was the point that these laymen had raised and did not want overlooked? The point was that the Constitution of the Church had no declaration of the congregation's doctrinal position, nor had the membership cards. It was a felt want. Would the minister not consider the matter? Any good Unitarian will understand why the minister began by hedging on this matter, but he began to realise that the congregation was not easily content any longer with vacancy in this. And so he had to get to work with, on the one hand, a Trust Deed that required public worship, and on the other, a living congregation which wanted to understand its religion humanistically. Here was the whole problem again in a nutshell. And, over and above the old problem, a strange reflection came to me. This was not the first time to my knowledge that laymen in this post-war period had come forward to appeal for some definitive statement of our witness, who were in fact desirous of recovering a sense of denominational witness. Is it a sign? Perhaps it is from this quarter—the rank and file of laymen—that the fresh incentive to our overdue re-thinking is to come.

A LAYMAN'S DIARY

August 14 (Sunday). This morning the BBC Home Service broadcast a special service from the historic St. John's Kirk, Perth (a fine mediæval church which I know well), to mark the meeting of the World Council of Churches this week at St. Andrews. (The credal basis of the World Council, requiring acceptance of "the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour", has the effect of excluding Unitarians from membership, which I think is a pity.) I don't think many Methodists can have gone to the service, as the singing of the congregation was disappointingly thin, even when they were singing Metrical Psalm 145 to *Duke Street*—and it is almost impossible to make *Duke Street* sound thin. The closing hymn, a most appropriate one for an ecumenical occasion, was No. 153 in the Scottish Church Hymnary:—

> Thy kingdom come! on bended knee
> The passing ages pray.

It is by F. L. Hosmer—an American Unitarian minister.

August 16. I have picked up a little book on the Parables which, to my delight, has turned out to be the book which, for years, I have been waiting for someone to write. It is *Interpreting the Parables* (S.C.M., 8/6), by Dr. A. M. Hunter (who is Professor of Biblical Criticism at Aberdeen University), and it has just come out. Into its 120 pages the author has packed (1) a masterly introduction ("What is a parable?"; "Why did Jesus use parables?"; "How faithfully have his own words come down to us in his parables?"), (2) a brief historical survey of the ways in which men have interpreted the parables since they were first written down—as elaborate allegories, as simple moralising tales, and so on, (3) an individual discussion of the main point of every one of sixty (yes, *sixty!*) parables from the first three Gospels, and (4) a final chapter on the ways in which it is—or is *not*—legitimate to use the parables of Jesus in present-day sermon writing.

The book is immensely readable; although it is clearly the work of a scholar, its abundant learning is firmly directed to practical ends. Often, when dealing with a point such as the real purpose of an obscure parable, or the authenticity of a probable late gloss, two or three theories are quoted and examined; the discussion is always scrupulously fair, but in every case Dr. Hunter leaves the reader in no doubt that he feels that one answer is better than the others, and he explains just why he considers that it *is* better. Puzzling stories like the Unjust Steward, the Labourers in the Vineyard, the Barren Fig Tree and the Importunate Widow, are convincingly explained. And the whole book is written in sinewy down-to-earth terms, as though the writer has got you by the coat lapels and is saying, "Now look here, man, this is the way it is; take it or leave it". I like a book to be written in that way, so long as it also sets out enough evidence to enable you to disagree intelligently with the author if you want to; and this book does just that.

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August 17. Coals of fire! A picture postcard from Jamie, "written in the midst of a hailstorm" (no stamp: fourpence to pay), *and* a card from Gordon, full of news about their life in camp. I take back all I said last week about "wireless silence".

August 18. In *Matters of Moment* tonight in the BBC Home Service John Freeman spoke with Dr. Hastings Banda, the Nyasaland African leader, and Mr. Tom Mboya, who is probably the most influential African leader in Kenya. They spoke on long-term and general topics, such as the place of the Parliamentary Opposition in a new African State, the position of an African-controlled country in relation to "the East" and "the West", and the prospects for Christianity in the emerging States. I had previously seen both leaders in television interviews earlier this year, and it was some little help to be able to visualise their faces in the mind's eye; but, as with the Epstein programme on sound radio last week, the men's voices and words were now all that one needed, and it would have been a distraction to have seen their faces as well.

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Both leaders impressed me greatly, as they had before. Dr. Banda sounds the more emotional and impulsive of the two, but a casual reference to "the flappers' vote in 1929" showed that he was well up in his constitutional history. Tom Mboya spoke more slowly, but hung on the point; I hope to goodness he is not going to be ousted by the release of Jomo Kenyatta, which is imminent, according to a recent article in the *Guardian*. Both men gave convincing reasons why one should not expect a Westminster-type Parliamentary Opposition in the early years of a new African State, so long as human rights and human dignity (Tom Mboya's words) were properly safeguarded. Neither man would align himself with "the East" or "the West"; clearly they thought such divisions irrelevant ("all are human

beings") to the present African predicament. But they both openly indicated that they did *not* regard Russia as clean-handed when it came to "imperialism", and Tom Mboya pointed out the phraseology of African freedom movements owed infinitely more to, say, the American Declaration of Independence than to any Communist influence.

August 19. Tomorrow we go off to Norfolk for a fortnight by the sea; for the last three days David has been packing and unpacking in readiness for The Day, and I don't think he'll sleep a wink tonight. I am hopefully making up a small stock of books, choosing them more for portability than anything else: Trollope's *Is He Popenjoy* (World's Classics), Robert Jungk's *Brighter than* 1,000 *Suns* (recently out as a Penguin), *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* (1887) a detective classic I never seem to have read, and the second half of D. H. Lawrence's *Kangaroo* (I got half-way *last* summer, and then stuck). No doubt I shall be lucky if I finish *one* of them. Last year I managed to battle my way through Goncharov's *Oblomov*, but I have been told that it made me very anti-social and that is not to happen again. Holiday Delusion Number One is the fond belief that one will be able to do a lot of useful reading.

UNIVERSALISM IN RELIGION

WHAT IS ITS GOAL?

By Arthur Peacock

MY question arises from the utterances made by some prominent figures in the American Unitarian-Universalist merger discussions. Like Tom Wardle, who commented upon them in a recent article in these pages, I feel that a tendency is appearing which could result in liberal religion emerging as "an eclectic hodge-podge of religious dicta and aphorisms".

When the discussion was proceeding as to the purposes of the proposed American Unitarian-Universalist Association two schools of thought were indicated. There were those who felt it important for the organization to relate itself directly and verbally with the Christian heritage out of which it sprang. Opposing these were those who felt no such need and who went so far as to affirm that such an expression was confining and unnecessary. A leading spokesman for this view declared that liberal religion was emerging as a new world faith taking its stand beside Catholics, Protestants, and Jews with none of whom "it is, at present, theologically compatible and into whose creedal categories it cannot fit".

It seems to me that it is this word *beside* which is important. It indicates a gulf between those who see the goal of universalism in religion as the fostering of understanding and appreciation between men of diverse views and those who see its goal in some form of syncretism. One perceived something of this division in Chicago discussions of the I.A.R.F. It is reflected in the demand for excluding the words "Liberal Christianity" from that body's title. It seems to me that these trends raise serious issues and that on this question of the attitude of Liberal Christians to other religions there exists at present a great deal of superficial thinking.

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To my mind the twentieth century Universalist is not someone who stands "beside" a religious tradition. He is someone who has gained religious experience within one or other of the great traditions; who feels that while for him this is wholly adequate, nevertheless for others, a similar experience, no less adequate for them, is gained within the traditions to which they belong. Recognizing this, the Universalist seeks to understand other traditions, to learn from them, to know of their deepest insights and visions, to reverence them, and to endeavour to persuade men of goodwill in other traditions to approach fuller life from their own in this same broad spirit.

One of the best examples of this position is to be found in the life of the gifted American woman, Vida Scudder. She was an Anglican and a follower of the High Church tradition. She is known for her study of St. Francis and editorial contributions to volumes in "Everyman Library". In the first world war Miss Scudder found herself in a dilemma over the pacifist issue. All her yearnings were for peace. But she felt it was morally wrong that a strong powerful nation should seek by violence to impose its will on a smaller nation. She turned to the New Testament for guidance and found little to help her. Then she recalled that among her father's books—he had been a Congregational missionary in India—that there were several translations of the Bhavagad Gita. She turned to one of these. In the thirteenth chapter on "Fearlessness" she found the guidance she was so greatly needing. She solved the problem which had been tormenting her. But she did not leave the church nor neglect her Bible. The word of the Gita strengthened her Christian faith at a crucial moment when it seemed to be waning. Henceforth she had a broader faith, a wider outlook.

That seems to me the goal of Universalism in religion. As with her so with others. It was Rahamoun Roy's contact with Muslim rulers in Bengal that led him to a broader view of religion than that provided by Orthodox Hinduism, and to establishing the Brahmo Somaj. It was contact with Ghandi and Tagore that led the Anglican priest, Charles Andrews, to perceive not only the insights in Hinduism in its noblest expressions but also to strive for a Christianity that rose above narrow creedal claims and allegiances. It was his friendship with Gandhi, his knowledge of the profound spiritual awareness revealed by the Mahatma, that made him realise the full implications of the Athanasian Creed with its condemnation of all outside the Catholic faith. And it was Gandhi and Tagore who persuaded him to remain in the church at that crucial moment when he felt he could not go on conducting services and was moved to write a letter of resignation to his Metropolitan.

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Again, it was Ghandi's contact with Sir Edwin Arnold and with Andrews that led him to look more deeply into the scriptures of his own tradition as well as to learn from the New Testament. When he was in South Africa as a young man a Methodist missionary tried to make him become a Christian. He was unsuccessful. Ghandi realized that it was only in relation to his own religion that the insights in others had real significance for him.

It seems to me that what we have to do at this time is to learn from such examples and to try to bring something of their approach into the religious climate. While it may be a good thing to declare ourselves as "inheritors of the wisdom of the universal prophets", "eager to experience the insights of the great faiths of the world" it is also well to remember, as T. S. Eliot has said, "that no man ever climbed to the higher stages of spiritual life, who has not been a believer in a particular religion or philosophy".

I feel increasingly that in this matter pleasing sentiments are not enough. There is need for much more serious study. We have to learn a great deal about other religions; they have need to learn more about us. Our goal, it seems to me, is to encourage, encounter and meet rather than take part in what is termed "organic synthesis". That can easily become what Tom Wardle aptly terms "hodge-podge syncretism"—religion without roots.

IT OCCURRED TO ME

by Muriel Hilton

AT Bergen, when travelling home from Norway, we were asked to keep an eye on a sixteen-year-old Norwegian girl travelling to Liverpool to stay with her grandparents. By the time we had left Newcastle we had gathered four more Norwegian girls about the same age travelling to England for the first time. They were enthusiastic, unsophisticated girls with all the swift responses of unspoiled youth, and they looked out upon industrial England with inquiring eyes. "Are all the people very poor who live here", they asked as the train went

through Leeds and the other woollen towns. We arrived in Lancashire and again they wondered. We left them at Manchester, the same train carrying them on to Liverpool, and we wondered what sort of impressions of our country they would take back with them. It was not only the pall of smoke that descended on me in that part of England. I became more than unusually aware of squalid dwellings, the evidences of an age when human beings were treated with less dignity than many animals, and this year after a holiday in Norway I was almost hit by the placards advertising the gutter press which of course are everywhere in our country.

Norway it seemed to us is still unspoiled, simple and unexploited by the worst aspects of commercialism. It is far more magnificent than we had ever imagined, yet with the grandeur, when the mountains are reflected in the calm depths of the fjord, there is a sense of unutterable peace and serenity. Most foreign visitors to Norway mention very swiftly their liking for the Norwegian people, the bounty of their hospitality, and we shall certainly always remember them with pleasure. The girls who waited on us at the hotels, many of them still at school and taking holiday jobs, were delightful, as pretty as the wild roses that were everywhere, and as one much-travelled American said, "With the most beautiful deportment in the world". They are still children of the earth.

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There are so many threads woven into the texture of a holiday, especially one taken for the first time in another country, and though one was staggered by the scenery, woven into the memory there are innumerable little incidents and quiet charming things. I shall always remember evening walks by the side of the gentle lapping water; the unending daylight enabling one to read long past midnight; an evening when we heard a cuckoo, saw a heron rise from the water and heard a man singing as he milked a cow. And the hare bells, the wild roses, the wild pansies, the sight and smell of hay drying in the sun will always be part of the memory of the holiday in Norway.

Do most people have strange encounters on holiday and remark on the smallness of the world? I suppose so. I have never yet had a holiday without encountering someone of our household of faith, which is extraordinary seeing that we are a comparatively small body. At our General Assembly meetings this year in London Dr. and Mrs. Laurence Staples were there from Washington and were greeted by the Assembly. On the liner going to Bergen we met them again and in the midst of the North Sea we talked about mutual friends on both sides of the Atlantic and American and English Unitarianism. We said goodbye to them as we reached Norway and then on our first day at Loen we saw them again at the same hotel. The one Dutch couple to whom we spoke we found in conversation to be closely related to the only Dutch friend I have, also a member of the Liberal church. It is good that even when so far away there is the possibility of meeting members of our faith and so giving the intimate "at home" feeling which is so reassuring, so comforting, and adds such a deep pleasure to a holiday.

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One of the most rewarding aspects of a holiday is that it enhances, "puts an edge" on the familiar things of one's ordinary days. We did not attend a place of worship in Norway, but on our way home we stopped at Bolton and on the Sunday went to Bank Street Chapel. It was like "coming home" to hear the familiar hymns again, to listen to a passage from "The Prophet" for a second lesson (Are people disappointed as I am when both lessons come from the Bible?) and to experience the fellowship of Unitarians. A memorable service it was, the impact after an absence from services all the more vivid.

Then after the deep pleasure of returning to our fellowships at Hastings and Maidstone we also had a rally at Northiam during the first week back in the south. As usual the little church was brimming with flowers lovingly arranged by Miss Kitty Compert who with her sister keeps our church open and bright with flowers throughout the year. Before walking the hill to the little church we stopped at Thornton House and there on the lawn quietly talking together were Basil Viney, Gordon Beverley and his wife and Gabriel Kereki. Near, sitting in chairs were friends from our Maidstone church. I don't know if it was because of the long days spent in a far away country, the somewhat superficial contacts with so many tourists abroad which made the impact of these gathered friends seem so tremendous, but I shall always remember that scene, that "bright moment". And a few minutes later when Mr. Charles Chitty from Dover greeted us and on the country road we encountered so many others of our South Eastern churches, I experienced a strange joy. Here we all were in the company of friends many of whom were of long years standing. It seemed fitting that Basil Viney should speak on "Fellowship" and a deeply moving service it was with the church full of people and flowers, the birds singing outside and the sun streaming in and releasing the perfume of lilies and roses.

I still have a lurking prejudice against organised religion, but on occasions like these, and after a period away, I know that the Unitarian fellowship helps to turn life's common water into wine and that "fellowship in heaven" indeed.

GEORGE THE FORTHRIGHT

By Hilda Whelan

IN these days when it is so easy to be side-tracked into compromise it is good to look back at the life of George Lansbury.

Many of us connect his name only with a negative kind of pacifism, but negativeness was entirely foreign to his nature. He was a positive individual his beliefs being expressed in prompt and drastic action very often to the embarrassment of others.

His own family was sacrificed for his beliefs. Almost before the cradle marks had worn off they knew what it meant to be on the wrong side. Imagine how it felt during the flag-waving years of the Boer War to be sent to school wearing a red rosette (emblem of the Socialist Party which was anti-war minded) while other children wore patriotic buttons bearing the face of a war hero. They endured the stinging taunt of traitor and at times actually fought their way to school.

His outspokenness was demonstrated by a conversation with the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) who was a member of the same commission set up to investigate the conditions of the aged poor. The Prince asked George Lansbury what he meant by a need for variety in their food, suggesting that an occasional biscuit might be what he intended. The reply was apt.

"Well, if you give them biscuits you will also have to supply them with teeth."

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The fact was that the makers of paupers' biscuits also made dog biscuits. This remark was taken in the right spirit, for later he was congratulated on the clearness of the way he put his case.

In connection with his untiring efforts on behalf of the poor, he attacked the practice of stone-breaking to which able-bodied paupers were put. He knew what this work was like. Years before, disgusted with the economic conditions in his own country he had emigrated to Australia. Here he found things no different and was driven to break stones to support his family—there was no other employment. No one could put anything over on him when it came to a bed-rock knowledge of stone splitting. For the skilled stone breaker who knew the grain and where the right spot to strike lay hidden, the work was terrible—for the inexperienced it was hell.

It was through his uncompromising attitude towards Women's Suffrage perhaps that he received his greatest hurt. There was a serious split in his party, not due to differing views over Women's Suffrage, for both he and Ramsay MacDonald supported it, but because of his unswerving straight-forward approach to the problem. He was more concerned about

Woman's Suffrage than he was for the safety of the party or his own seat.

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Ultimately he felt forced to resign and appealed to the electors to reinstate him on this issue alone, but they rejected his appeal, arguing that he had thrown up the job for which they had elected him. He remained out of the House from 1912 to 1922.

During these years among other social activities he served on the Borough Council and was responsible for leading his fellow members into a term of imprisonment for refusing to pay certain taxes. At that time Poplar was one of what were termed "the poor boroughs" having to support their destitute out of the rates which consequently, at times, rose to 23s. in the pound, while a few "rich boroughs" revelled in the comparatively speaking ridiculous figure of 10s. in the pound. Public meetings, speeches, deputations, had all failed to bring relief.

By 1921 the Labour Council of the Poplar Borough were in despair. They were threatened by bankruptcy due to increasing unemployment and destitution in the locality and were infuriated by the knowledge that out of the rates had to be paid half-yearly large sums to the London County Council, the Metropolitan Police, the Metropolitan Asylums Board and other central authorities for meeting the cost of education, drainage, etc. As a last resort, the Councillors, led by George Lansbury, refused to collect and pay these half-yearly taxes and found themselves in gaol.

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The six weeks that followed were a time of acute embarrassment to the authorities who tied themselves up in knots trying to find a way to release their unwanted prisoners without losing face. Enormous processions marched with bands and banners around the prison walls. Loud voiced orators addressed crowds from upper windows overlooking the prison. Pandemonium reigned inside and out. Finally the reform came into existence. It had been fought for over thirty years. Every poor borough of London benefited by many hundreds of thousands of pounds by this action and the administration of the Poor Law in these areas was made infinitely easier.

When once more a member of Parliament, George Lansbury not only attacked his political opponents, enlivening what might have been dull sessions in the House of Commons by fierce skirmishes with Winston Churchill, but was outspoken in his differences with members of his own party. His warm impulsiveness was often in conflict with the cool calculating mind of Ramsay MacDonald. George Lansbury would not, or could not, join in political trickery even in what he considered a good cause.

His party must have felt many times that he let the side down. But George was not interested in the side—he was only concerned with "the people" who in those days had no time and little strength to do more than keep themselves alive.

Most of the Socialists in 1932 were agnostics, if not atheists and certainly antagonistic towards the Church, yet George Lansbury (for many years Superintendent of a Sunday School) deliberately put himself "in the bad" by writing a letter to *The Times* calling on the Church to help by prayer and effort to solve the problem of misery and destitution under which the country laboured.

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For him prayer meant clarifying and purifying the mind in order to acquire straighter thinking and renewed effort, so that the will of God could be discovered and performed. He believed that if Christians put the efficacy of prayer to a real test something dynamic would happen. Needless to say he was hardly popular with his party.

The fact that he had no high standard of living to maintain helped him in his fight against compromise. Even as a member of the Cabinet he and his much loved wife Bessie lived in the humble surroundings they had occupied from the beginning.

Unlike so many other successful men he did not simply keep in touch with "the people". He remained one of them—eating the same kind of food, dressing like them, thinking their thoughts—even slipping out on an errand in his carpet slippers. The upper and middle classes were not among his intimate friends. He had few. His own family and suffering humanity as a whole seemed to content him.

He was one of the few people who have learnt to recognise success and failure for what they are worth. Early in life he gauged its seesaw-like tendency, one minute raising a man to the pinnacle of high hope then dropping him down with a disconcerting bump. He called its bluff so that whether he was perched sky-high or crashing at ground level he was on an inner even keel.

News Review

Memoir of W. J. Carter

The report of the death of my husband, W. J. Carter, has appeared in the *Inquirer*. But his life as a blind person must be of interest to many, so I am venturing a paragraph.

Despite his blindness he liked to live as normal a life as possible and he lived as independently as ever he could. He accepted help when offered in the right way but he was absolutely intolerant of those who were likely to sentimentalise over his disability.

He was a man of comparatively few friends, but many were lifelong. Those who were admitted to his closest association knew his flashing wit and appreciated the breadth of mind and knowledge which were at his disposal.

He managed to get the best out of life—certainly not in a material sense—but in many, many ways. His companionship with his wife, his love of small children, his understanding of young men. He loved fresh air and the smells of the country. Especially in the years before his last illness, after he had given up smoking, his wife and he were in the habit of taking a short evening walk, starting at 11 p.m. to Carisbrooke Castle. Sometimes was heard a rustling of leaves, a very distant bark of a dog or a movement of a bird. It may have appealed to him that they, his wife and he were in the dark and if anything he had the advantage.

Among his delights was his ability to play the piano and violin, not well, but once, well enough to join in a Church concert, playing with a friend who was a very gifted violinist. In the same way as other blind people he had infinite patience in learning music. His music was in Braille and with the book propped on the stand he would read a bar at a time, left page, left hand, right page, right hand. The bar memorised, he played it over and over until bar by bar he had memorised the whole. His knowledge of hymn tunes was immense. His favourite composer was Bach, and he loved to trace Bach's influence on Church music.

He read a great deal and was read to. It was his pride that he could deal with his own correspondence.

His love of the French language seemed somehow natural to him. His mastery of Esperanto amazing. He and his Esperanto associates spoke it like "natives". It was a great disappointment to him that it has not up to now gained more strength and it's use not sought internationally.

His love and his work for the Unitarian movement will have been reported elsewhere, it suffices for me to say he has loved and been beloved everywhere he has gone.

His life has been a challenge that many of us will find difficult to answer.

F.A.C.

Hindoo Unitarian League

(A reader found the enclosed paragraph on an old newspaper cutting, dated 1870. Perhaps our readers in Calcutta will comment upon it.)

"It is worthwhile for all intelligent men to watch the progress of the remarkable movement in India known as the "Brahmo-Somaj". Appearances seem to foretell that the dissent from the Brahminical religion will have an immense effect upon the future history of the peninsula, and may perhaps have such success as to become a second Buddhism. The members of the Hindoo Unitarian League increase yearly, and they have now built for themselves a handsome place of worship in Calcutta, which their leader, Keshub Chunder Sen, has inaugurated with the reading of a deed of dedication well deserving to be quoted. "Today", ran this remarkable paper, "by the mercy of God, the public worship of God is instituted in this place for the use of the Brahmo community. Every week the only one God, the perfect and infinite, without a second, the Almighty and All-holy, shall be worshipped here. No man, or inferior being, or material object shall be worshipped here as identical with God, or like unto God, or an incarnation of God; and no prayer or hymn shall be offered or chanted

to anyone except God. No carved or painted image shall be kept here. No animal shall be sacrificed here. Neither eating nor drinking, nor any manner of folly or frivolity, shall be allowed here. No object that has been worshipped by any sect shall be ridiculed here. No sect shall be villified, hated, or turned into derision. Divine service shall be conducted here in such spirit and manner as shall enable all men and women, irrespective of distinctions of caste, to unite in one family, eschew error and sin, and advance in wisdom, faith and righteousness'. The declaration was then buried in the centre of the temple, and, after a simple and eloquent service, 21 neophytes were received, and gifts were distributed to 800 poor Hindoos. Those interested in the subtle problems of the East may here watch the sowing of a seed which may grow into a mighty tree."

Horsham.—A Garden Party, held at Stinfold Manor by invitation of Mr. and Mrs. G. Ramsden, raised £50 for the church on Saturday, August 6th. A Barbecue, attended by 30 members, was held on the evening of August 15th, by the River Arun, which flows past the garden of the Secretary of the Church.

Gift of One Thousand Pounds

Belfast, First Church.—The church exterior has been repainted and the forecourt provided with new gates and railings, lower and less cumbersome than the old ones. These show the church off to better advantage from the street. New "interchangeable notice boards" are being erected, one for church notices and the other for special announcements and the Wayside Pulpit. The latter is read daily by thousands of people who pass to and from the shipyards and aircraft factories along Rosemary Street. At the Prizegiving of the Royal Belfast Academical Institution a year or two ago, the Lord Chief Justice quoted our Wayside Pulpit and commended it to his audience.

The church Treasurer has just received a most generous anonymous donation of one thousand pounds towards the installation of a lift in the Central Hall. A lift well had been provided and some preliminary work carried out, but the rest of the equipment has now been ordered and the lift should be working early in 1961. This addition will be most welcome, especially to the older members of the congregation, and also make the premises more serviceable for general use by church and outside organisations.

Dr. McLachlan is spending part of his holiday in North Austria at a Work-Camp under United Nations Association auspices where new houses and flats are being built for refugees. He will be Camp Leader for a short period.

Correspondence

Letters should be addressed to the Editor, "The Inquirer" 14 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1. They should not in general exceed three to four hundred words in length.

Rev. W. Bottomley's "Retirement"

In your Australian News referring to the welcome given to the Rev. Tom Wardle, who has taken up the ministry of the All Souls Unitarian Congregation in Melbourne, and the Community Church (Unitarian) at Seaford, it is accurately reported "in place of the Rev. W. Bottomley, who had retired".

At the same time it could be inferred that my work for Unitarianism had ceased and that I had now taken my place among the retired ministers no longer able by reason of age or infirmity to continue active. (I am only 70).

What really is the case is that I have been glad to retire from the ministry of the aforementioned congregations in place of a younger, able and promising man, in whom we have high hopes and confidence.

I am now released to continue, as far as I am able, the work which the Unitarian Fellowship of Australia has in view, namely the strengthening of the bonds between the Australian Unitarian (and I mean Unitarian) churches in Australia. The coming of the Rev. Tom Wardle, and the meeting of the four ministers mentioned in your report (July 9) has accelerated the move for closer unity, and a conference is being arranged, to take place in Adelaide, with a view to establishing a kind of union on somewhat similar lines to the British General Assembly.

There is no question then of a final retirement. I hope still to continue on the list of active ministers, but in a somewhat wider capacity than was possible when I had the oversight of two congregations. Let not the knell of doom yet be sounded!

Victoria, Australia. Yours, William Bottomley.

THE TRIAL OF JESUS

By T. A. Burkill

It is unfortunate that most people—even those who attend church regularly—read the gospels without considering their historical background and the questions the evangelists were trying to answer. With modern writers the position is quite different. The reader belongs to the same period as the author, and he is usually at once aware of what the author is trying to deal with. But in the case of the gospels there is a gap of two thousand years to be bridged if one is to read intelligently. To enter into sympathy with the authors, the modern reader must make a special mental effort, otherwise he will misinterpret what the documents have to say. He has to try to understand the motives of the writers, the circumstances in which they wrote and the problems with which they were concerned.

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This is clearly illustrated in the gospel-reports of the trial of Jesus. Most modern readers are misled through not making allowance for the aims of the evangelists in their diverse representations of what took place. I stress the word "diverse" in this connection, for it is important to recognise that the four gospels do not represent the events leading to the death of Jesus in precisely the same manner. Broadly, perhaps, they set themselves to answer the same kind of questions, and yet in a more particular way the situation of each evangelist had its peculiarities; also, there are personal factors to be taken into account—so that one stressed this point, another that. For instance, Luke had a Greek upbringing—presumably the only Gentile writer in the New Testament—and hence, as we should expect, his mode of representation is different from that of a Jewish writer, like Matthew.

Among the fundamental motives which have to be considered in any attempt to understand the varied accounts of the trial of Jesus, two are especially important. In the first place, all four evangelists were concerned to show that the career of Jesus, culminating though it did in death by crucifixion, took place in accordance with the declared will of God. Men asked how the shamefulness of the betrayal, the disgrace of the rejection, and the horror of the crucifixion could be compatible with the transcendent dignity of the heaven-sent Messiah; and the exponents of the apostolic faith replied by maintaining that a right appreciation of the prophecies of the Old Testament indicated that Jesus's ignominious death was an integral part of his divine mission for the redemption of the world.

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This kind of motive accounts for the numerous allusions to the Old Testament in the passion-narratives of the gospels. In the second place, all four evangelists, despite their desire to demonstrate that the crucifixion of Jesus took place according to the will of God, are nevertheless anxious to make it clear that the Jewish people, through the agency of their representative leaders, are to be held responsible for the crime of rejecting the Messiah. Such a motive was again a natural outcome of the church's historical situation. For, whereas the gospel was meeting with wide acceptance in the Gentile world, the Jews for the most part were vigorously opposing it. The rift between Christianity and Judaism became broader and deeper, and feelings of mutual antipathy eventually prevailed. On the other hand, the Roman authorities for a time seem to have adopted an attitude of detached indifference, apparently regarding the new religion merely as a special form of Judaism. And since the missionary activities of the apostolic preachers were being conducted within the bounds of the Roman empire, it was obviously of great practical importance for the church that its message should be set forth in such a manner as not to offend the susceptibilities of those who represented the imperial government. The evangelists were therefore at pains to show that, although the crucifixion followed a trial by a Roman official, Pilate in fact found nothing obnoxious in Jesus, it being solely through the unwarranted hostility of his own countrymen that the Messiah was put to death.

Continued on page 686

THE CALENDAR OF THE CHURCHES

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1960

ABERDEEN, Unitarian Church, Skene Street, 11 and 6, Rev. W. B. TAVENER
ABERYSTWYTH, New Street Meeting House, 11, Rev. J. H. CIBAN DAVIES
ACCRINGTON, Unitarian Church, Kearsley Road, 11.15 and 3, Rev. B. GILL
ALTRINCHAM, Dunham Road Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Supply
ASTLEY, Unitarian Church, Manchester Road, 6.30, Supply
BATH, Trim Street Chapel, Unitarian, 6.30, Rev. E. SIDDETT
BELFAST, All Souls, Elmwood Avenue, 11.30 and 7, Dr. A. L. AGNEW
BELFAST, First Church, Rosemary Street, 11.30 and 7, Rev. W. J. WHARTON
BEWDLEY CHAPEL (nr. Kidderminster), Unitarian Church, 11, Mr. A. G. TARRANT
BILLINGSHURST, Free Church, High Street, 11, Miss E. M. BUTCHER
BIRKENHEAD, Unitarian Church, Balls Road, 6.30 (September 11) Rev. E. B. SHORT.
BIRMINGHAM, Church of Messiah, Broad Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. M. C. HARRIS
BIRMINGHAM, Waverley Road, Church and Hurst Street Mission, Small Heath, 6, Mr. A. BOWDEN
BLACKPOOL, North Shore, Dickson Road, 10.45 and 6.30, Mr. E. A. WEST
BLACKPOOL, South Shore, Lytham Road, 11 and 6.30, Mr. FRANK LOWE
BOLTON, Bank Street, 2.30, Sunday School, 10.30, Rev. E. SHERVELL PRICE
BOLTON, Unity Church, Deane Road, 6.30, Rev. A. J. LONG
BOLTON, Wellsbrae, 3, and Bullwell Road, 6.30, Supply
BOSTON (Lincs.), Unitarian Chapel, Spain Lane, 6.30, Rev. HENRY HALL
BOURNEMOUTH, Unitarian Church, West Hill Road, 11, Rev. H. CRABTREE
BRADFORD, Broadway Avenue, 3.15, Supply
BRADFORD, Town Hall Square, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. FRANK A. BELLOTT
BRIDGWATER, Christ Church, Dampier Street, 3, Sunday School, 6.30, Rev. WM. MILLAR
BRIGHOUSE, Unitarian Chapel, 11, Rev. G. RANDALL JONES
BRIGHTON, Christ Church, Unitarian, New Road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. JOHN ROWLAND
BRISTOL, Lewin's Mead Meeting, 6.30, Rev. A. H. BUTLER
BRISTOL, Oakfield Road, 11, Rev. A. H. BUTLER, 6.30, Mr. R. L. NICHOLSON
BURY, Bank Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. E. WORSLEY
CAMBRIDGE, Memorial Church, Emmanuel Road, 11, Mr. G. L. BOYLE
CARDIFF, The West Grove Unitarian Church, 6.30, Rev. T. J. JONES
CHATHAM, The Church of the Great Companions, Hammond Hill, 3, Mrs. INGE. HUSH
CHELTENHAM, Bayshill Unitarian Church, Royal Well, 11, Sunday School, 6.30 Rev. John M. Quick
CHESTER, Matthew Henry's Chapel, Trinity Street, 11, Mr. W. R. STRACHAN, 6.30, Rev. W. J. McILWRAITH
CHESTERFIELD, Elder Yard Chapel, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. A. W. VALLANCE
CHESTERTON CHAPEL, Atherton, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. KENNETH TURNER
CONGLETON, Great Meeting House, Hightoad Road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. E. H. MORRAD
CREWE, Free Christian Church, Heath Street, 6.30, Supply
CREWKERNE, Unitarian Church, Hermitage Street, 11 and 6.30, Mrs. M. R. DICKIN
CROYDON, Free Christian Church, Friends Road, 11, Children's Service, 6.30, Rev. J. P. CRAIG
DENTON, Wilton Street Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Supply
DERBY, Peter Gate Unitarian Chapel, 6.30, Mr. T. GREGORY
DITCHLING, Old Meeting House, 10.45, Miss H. E. WAITE
DONCASTER, Free Church, Hall Gate, 11 and 6.30, Rev. ALEC L. FERGUS
DOVER, Adrian Street, Unitarian Church, 11, Sunday School, 6.30, Rev. P. C. WHITEMAN
DUBLIN, Stephen's Green, West, 11.30 and 7.30, Rev. E. LAVELL HICKS
DUDLEY, Old Meeting House, Wolverhampton Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. NORMAN KINGDON
DUKINFIELD, Old Chapel, Chapel Hill, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. S. P. WHITEHOUSE
DUNDEE, Unitarian Church, 11, Communion Road, 11, Supply
EDINBURGH, St. Mark's Church, Castle Terrace, 11, Rev. BRUCE FINDLOW
EXETER, George's Chapel, South Street, 6.30, Rev. Dr. F. D. MEYER-KLUCKE
Gee Cross, High Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. HARRY SMITH
GLASGOW, St. Vincent Street, Unitarian Church, 11, Supply
GLOSSOP, Hyam Street, 2, Sunday School, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. W. H. CORDELL
GORTON, Gorton Street, 3, Rev. Anne M. Quick
GOSLARGREEN, Blenheim Chapel (Piccadilly), 6.30, Rev. G. MAUDE. SHARPE
GUILDFORD, Ward Street Church, 11, Rev. G. M. HARRIS
HALE CHAPEL, Hale Barns, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. G. J. PRICE
HALIFAX, Northgate End, 6.30, Rev. FRANK WALKER
HAMPTON, Free Christian Church, South Terrace, 11 and 6.30, Rev. DENNISON HILTON
HASLEMERE, Great Meeting, Bones Lane, 11 and 6, Rev. E. A. DAVIES
HASTINGS, Worthing Road, 11, Mrs. T. TURNER
HEREFORD, Priory Street, 11, Rev. FRANK WALKER
HULL, Park Street Church (Unitarian), 6.30, Rev. BRYANT PEERS
KENDAL, Market Place, Unitarian Chapel, 6.30, Student
KIDDERMINSTER, New Meeting House, 11, Women's League, 6.30, Mr. W. B. WALTERS
KNUTSFORD, Brook Street Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. ALBERT SMITH
LANCASTER, St. Nicholas Street Church, 6.30, Supply
LEEDS, Mill Hill Chapel, City Square, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. B. L. GUILLAND
LEICESTER, Northampton Road, 11, Junior Church, 6.30, Mr. C. V. WALTON
LEICESTER, The Great Meeting, East Bond Street, 11 and 6.30, Mrs. M. GREGORY
LEWES, Westgate Chapel, 11, Supply
LINCOLN, High Street, Unitarian Chapel, 6.30, Rev. H. W. ENGWELL
LIVERPOOL, Ancient Chapel of Toxteth, 11 and 6.30, Dr. P. N. TURNELL
LIVERPOOL, Brunswick Free Church, 11, Rev. C. A. PAYNE
LIVERPOOL, Hanover Street, Hall Street, 6.30, Rev. J. KENT MERRETT
LIVERPOOL, Gateacre Chapel, 11 Rev. E. B. BUTLER and 6.30, Mrs. BUTLER
LIVERPOOL, Hamilton Road, Egerton, 3, Sunday School, 6.30, Rev. C. A. PAYNE
LIVERPOOL, Hope Street, 6.30, Rev. E. B. BUTLER
LIVERPOOL, Little Road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. E. ERNEST SHORT
LONDON, Hall Street, Edgware Road, 6, Rev. WALTER M. LONG
LONDON, Hackney Mission and Stamford Street Chapel, 6.30, Mr. JOHN WILSON
LONDON, Hinton, Hillo Road, 11, Rev. E. G. LEE
LONDON, Essex Church, Palace Gardens Terrace, Notting Hill Gate, 11 and 6.30, Rev. GRAHAM SHORT
LONDON, Finsbury Park, Upton Lane, 6.30, Rev. T. E. DAVIES
LONDON, Golders Green, Hoop Lane, 11, Miss M. K. GARDY, 6.30, Miss L. M. HUMPHREY
LONDON, Hackney, New Gravel Pit Church, Chatham Place, 11 (Family Service) Mr. A. MACKINNON
LONDON, Hampstead, Rosslyn Hill, 11, Rev. Frederick P. MAY
LONDON, Highgate Hill, Unitarian Church, 11, Rev. T. L. JONES
LONDON, Hoxton, Hanover Street, 6.30, Rev. A. V. FOX
LONDON, Islington Unitarian Church, Queen Road, 11, Rev. A. V. FOX
LONDON, Lewisham, Unitarian Church, High Street, 11, Mr. JEREMY GODDING
LONDON, Mansford Street Church, Bethnal Green, 6.30, Mr. R. H. CORDEUX
LONDON, Richmond Free Church, Ormond Road, 11, Rev. WALTER M. LONG
LONDON, Stamford, New Row Lane, Unitarian Church, 11.30, Children's Church, 6.30, Rev. F. BALMFORTH
LONDON, Wandsworth, Unitarian Church, East Hill, 11, Rev. ARTHUR PRESTON (also 6.30, 1st Sunday in the month)
LONDON, Welsh Unitarian Church of Highgate Hill Unitarian Church, 1st and 3rd Sundays, 6, Rev. T. E. JONES
LONDON, Wood Green, Unity Church, Newsham Road, 6.30, Rev. R. TAYLOR
LYTHAM St. Annes (Ansdell), Chanting Road, 11, Rev. E. W. DEARDEN
MACCLESFIELD, King Edward Street, 10.45 and 6.30, Supply
MARSTON, Unitarian Church, Market Buildings, 6.30, Mrs. MORRIS, Halton
MANCHESTER, Bowdon, Unitarian Chapel, Chapel Lane, 6.30, Supply
MANCHESTER, Cross Street Chapel, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. C. H. BARTLETT
MANCHESTER, Failsworth, Pole Lane Chapel, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. DONALD MILLS
MANCHESTER, Gorton, Brookfield Church, Hyde Road, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. MAURICE BURDEN
MANCHESTER, Monton Church, Eccles, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. W. HILL WARDLE
MANCHESTER, Pendleton Unitarian Green Lane, 6.30, Supply
MANCHESTER, Platt Chapel, Rusholme, 6.30, Miss F. J. HUMPHRY
MANCHESTER, Stockport Road Mission, 6.30, Supply
MANCHESTER, Strand Chapel, Whitefield (September 11), 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. SYDNEY H. KNIGHT
MANCHESTER, Wellington Road, Cheadle-cum-Gatley, 11, Supply
MANCHESTER, Wythenshawe, Unitarian Church, Brownley Road, Rochdale, 6.30, Rev. JOHN GILL
MANSFIELD, Old Meeting House, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. EDWARD SIBBRATT
MARPLE, Unitarian Hall, 11, Stockport Road, 11 each Sunday
MIDDLESBROUGH, Free Christian Church, 6.30, Rev. LAWRENCE HALLWORTH
MIDDLETON, Old Road Chapel, 3.15, Supply
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE, The Church of the Divine Unity, Ellison Place, 11 and 6.30, Rev. JOHN STORRS
NEWCHURCH (Rossendale) Bethlehem Unitarian Church, 10.30 and 6, Rev. JOHN MATTHEW
NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT, High Street, 6.30 (also 11, 1st Sunday in the month), Supply
NORTHAMPTON, Kettering Road Church, 11, Rev. L. TOWLAND
NORWICH, Octagon Chapel, Colegate, 11, Mr. R. S. RAINSFORD
NOTTINGHAM, High Pavement Chapel, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. C. GORDON BELAH
OLDBURY, Unitarian Church, Birmingham Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. HAROLD A. GOSS
OLDHAM, Lord Street Chapel, 10.45, Rev. T. E. NUTTALL and 6.30 Rev. B. GILL
OXFORD, Manchester College Chapel, 11.30, The Rev. the Principal
PADIHAM, Nazareth Unitarian Church, Knight Hill, 10.30, Supply, 10.30 and 6, Supply
PARK LANE CHAPEL, nr. Wigan, 11 and 6.30, Rev. GORDON L. CLARKE
PLYMOUTH, Unitarian Church, Notte Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. H. BLACKBURN
POOLE, Unitarian Church, Hill Street, 11, Junior Church, 6.30, Rev. J. W. DOBBIE
PORTSMOUTH, John Pounds Memorial Church, High Street, 11, Junior Church, 6.30, Rev. JOHN STORRS
PRESTON, Unitarian Chapel, Church Street, 6.30, Supply
RENDHAM, Basin, The Meeting House, 11, Rev. FRANCIS TERRY
RINGSTEAD CHAPEL, nr. Hunstanton, Norfolk, 3, Rev. R. L. PESTRIDGE
ROCHDALE, Blackwater Street, 10.30 and 6, Rev. F. W. BAKER
ROSSENDALE, Church of our Father, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. ELSIE PHILLIPS
SALE, Ashton Road, 11, Supply
SCARBOROUGH, Unitarian Church, Westborough, 6.30, Rev. G. W. PARKINSON
SHEFFIELD (Attercliffe), 6.30, Mr. C. J. BOULTING
SHEFFIELD, Pitsmoor Old Chapel, 11, Supply
SHEFFIELD, Unity Church, Crookesmoor Road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. E. D. DAVIES
SHEFFIELD, Upper Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. HORACE BACON
SHREWSBURY, High Street, Unitarian, 6.30, Rev. L. A. GARRARD
SHREWTON, Old Meeting, Unitarian, High Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. H. WHITAKER
SOUTHAMPTON, Church of the Saviour, Tamdon Road, 6.30, Mr. JOHN MITCHELL
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, Dunlop Road, 6.30, Mr. J. HALLAM
SOUTHPORT, Portland Street Church, 11 and 6.30, Supply
SOUTHPORT, Unitarian Church, St. Peter's Gate, 10.30 and 6.30, Supply
ST. HELENS, Corporation Street, 6.30, Supply
STOCKTON-ON-TEES, Wellington Street, 6.30, Rev. A. D. WILLIAMS (also 11, Second Sunday in the month)
STOCKTON-ON-TEES, Presbyterian Unitarian Chapel, 11, Rev. C. SHARPE
SWANSEA, Unitarian Church, High Street, 6.30, Rev. L. BARRY SHORT (also 11, First Sunday in the month)
SWANSEA, Pentrefelin Free Christian Meeting House, 11, Supply
SWINDON, Swindon Hill Road, 6.30, Rev. P. B. GODFREY
TAUNTON, Mary St. Chapel, 11, Rev. WM. MILLAR
TEWKESBURY, Old Meeting House, Ashchurch Road, 6.30, Rev. G. KEMBLE
TORRINGTON, Unitarian Church, 10.45, 6 No Service
TORQUAY, Unity Church, off The Terrace, 11, Rev. CHARLES EASTON
TROWBRIDGE, Campus Unitarian Church, 11, Rev. S. SPENCER
WALLASEY, Memorial Church, Manor Road, 11, Supply, 6.30, Dr. S. J. KENNETT
WALSALL, Unitarian Free Church, Stafford Street, 11, Rev. R. J. WILLIAMSON, 2.30, Sunday School
WARRINGTON, Cairo Street, 10.30 and 6.30, Rev. ERIC WILD
WARWICK, Unitarian Chapel, High Street, 7, Rev. H. MADDOCK
WATFORD, Friends' House, Church Road (by permission), 7.30 (last Sunday in the month)
WEST BROMWICH, Lodge Road, 11, Children's Church, 6.30, Rev. R. J. WILLIAMSON
WEST KIRBY, Brookhill Gardens, 11, Rev. MAURICE JOHNSON (also 6.30, First Sunday in the month)
WIGTON, Pinegrove, 2.30, Mr. F. E. SPEIGHT
WILMSLOW, Dean Row, 10.45 and Supp 3, Rev. JOHN GILL
YORK, St. Saviourgate Chapel, 6.30, Rev. W. T. WILKES

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MELBOURNE, Unitarian Church, Collins and Plum, C.2, Unitarian Hall Essex Street, 4.15, Services: 4 p.m. second Sunday in each month, Evening 7 p.m. Rev. V. JAMES
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SYDNEY, New South Wales, Unitarian Church, 11, Pitt Street (off College St.) 7.15, Rev. D. W. SIMPSON, Manse Telephone LU 5222
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CANADA

MONTREAL, Church of the Messiah, Sherbrooke Street West and Simpson Street, 11, Rev. LEONARD MARSH
TORONTO, First Unitarian Church, 175 St. Clair Avenue West, 10.30, Rev. JAY F. CHIDLEY
VANCOUVER, B.C., Unitarian Church of Vancouver, 1,550, Tenth Avenue West, 11, Rev. A. F. HOWEY

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(continued from page 682)

When such motives are taken into account the biblical records concerning the trial of Jesus are considerably illuminated. This can be demonstrated. The upshot would seem to be that Mark's story of Jesus's condemnation at a nocturnal session of the Jewish Senate conflicts with the indubitable fact that Jesus was put to death on a cross. For crucifixion does not appear to have been employed as a method of execution among the Jews of the period. It was a characteristically Roman form of punishment; hence from the fact that Jesus was crucified it is legitimate to infer that he was sentenced to death by the Roman procurator. Had he really been condemned for blasphemy in a Jewish court, he would have been put to death by stoning (Lev. 24, 16).

In face of these very important considerations one might endeavour to save the historicity of Mark's story by appealing to Jn. 18, 31, where it is stated that the Jews reminded Pilate that it was not lawful for them to put any man to death. It might then be argued that the sanhedrin, though competent to pass sentence in capital cases, had not the power to carry out such sentences; execution could only take place after the sentence had been ratified by the procurator. But the argument ought to go further, for Pilate did not merely confirm a sentence which had been passed by the sanhedrin, otherwise Jesus would have been put to death by stoning. So it must be argued that the sanhedrin was not even competent to carry out a sentence when it had received the approval of the procurator, this being the meaning of the statement in Jn. 18, 31. In such circumstances, however, it is far from easy to understand why the proceedings described in Mk. 14, 53-65 should have taken place at all; a Jewish trial could have no legal validity, and would members of the sanhedrin have left their homes during the night to take part in a sort of mock-trial at which they might make pretence of condemning a prisoner whom in reality they could only prosecute?

*

What then may we suppose really happened? The evidence available would seem to point to the conclusion that events followed the following course: Jesus was secretly arrested by officers of the sanhedrin (perhaps accompanied by Roman soldiers) who received assistance from one of his disciples; he was held in custody at the high priest's residence for the remaining hours of the night; he was handed over to the procurator after a matutinal meeting of the hierarchs had prepared an indictment on the basis of a political charge (Mk. 14, 1); and he was condemned to death by the procurator as a dangerous aspirant to royal power. The case did not come before the sanhedrin because Jesus had not committed a capital religious offence in the sense of the Jewish law. The Christian doctrine of the crucified Messiah may well have been regarded as blasphemous by certain Jewish authorities on the ground that a crucified person was under the curse of God himself (Deut. 21, 23; Gal. 3, 13); but when Jesus stood for trial he had not yet suffered the disgrace of crucifixion, a fact which is overlooked in the Markan legend of a nocturnal trial before the sanhedrin. Perhaps the so-called cleansing of the temple, through arousing the anxieties of the Sadducean priesthood, was the immediate occasion of the arrest. Apparently, it required but little provocation to excite the patriotic passions of the multitudes that assembled in Jerusalem for the passover, and it was possibly thought in Sadducean circles that, as a precautionary measure, Jesus should be removed before the feast began. Quite disinterested motives could have been involved, for the Sadducean leaders would be well aware of the violence with which the procurator was wont to suppress popular risings (cp. Lk. 13, 1). Without making very careful enquiries it may have been concluded that Jesus was a Zealotic revolutionary who made pretensions to Messianic or royal dignity. Hence, soon after the incident in the temple, certain Sadducean magistrates (who generally sought to uphold friendly relations with the Roman authorities) resolved to have Jesus arrested, and forthwith made arrangements for a procuratorial trial at which the prosecution would be conducted on the basis of a charge of sedition.

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All letters and manuscripts for the Editor must reach him not later than Saturday morning for publication the next week. All communications must be accompanied by the name and address of the sender.

Subscription Rates: £1 6s. 6d. per annum (post free).

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Address: 14 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.
TEL.: EUS 7334 Editorial: EUS 2812.

Printed by SOUTH ESSEX RECORDERS, Ltd., High Road, Ilford, Essex, and Published by THE INQUIRER PUBLISHING Co., Ltd., at the Temporary Office, 14, Gordon Square, W.C.1.—Manchester (Wholesale): JOHN HEYWOOD, Deansgate. Saturday Sept. 3, 1960